

1721
3
The Religious Care of Families

Recommended from

ABRAHAM'S *Example*:

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in

Gravel-Lane, S O U T H W A R K,

January I. 17²¹₂₂.

By DANIEL MAYO, A. M.

Published, with Enlargements, at the Request
of the Managers of a Charity-School.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN CLARK, at the Bible and Crown
in the Poultry, near Cheapside: And may also be
had of E. MATTHEWS, at the Bible in Pater-
noster-Row; and R. FORD, at the Angel in the
Poultry. MDCCXII.

Price Six-Pence.

DE

The Religious Care of the Soldier

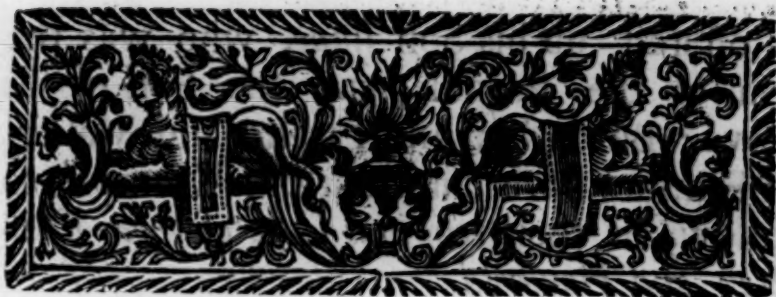
A Sermon

SERMON

By Daniel May, A. M.

LONDON

a
t
a
C
h
v
i



GEN. XVIII. 19.

For I know him that he will command his Children and his Household after him; and they shall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.



THE History of the Patriarch *Abraham* will not only afford us a bright Example for our Imitation of a *strong Faith*, by which we give Glory to God, when like him, we stagger not at the Promise thro' Unbelief; and of *unlimited Obedience* unto God, as a Proof of a true and living Faith, as when He, at the Divine Command, left his Native Country and his Kindred and Father's House, to go where God should lead him, not knowing otherwise whither he went; or when

4 The RELIGIOUS CARE

he offered up his Son *Isaac*, who was the Son of the Promise, and the Son of his Love: But in him also Parents and Masters of Families have an illustrious Example to follow, in their *religious Care of their Children and Household.*

A very considerable Part of this first Book of *Moses* called *Genesis*, is taken up with the Account of this eminent Patriarch; and in this 18th Chapter we find an Account of God's gracious Appearance to him, and favourable Converse with him, as with a *Friend*: And it was *Abraham's* highest Honour, that *he was called the Friend of God*, James 2. 23. In what God said at this Time, we may observe he informs this good Man, with his Purpose of Mercy to himself, and his Family, and indeed to the whole World, that *Sarah his Wife should have a Son*, v. 10. that in a little Time she should bear and bring forth the Son of the Promise, in whom *the Seed was called*, and from whom the *Messias* should spring, in whom not only his Family, but all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed. And then he acquaints him with his Purpose of *Wrath* against *Sodom* and the Neighbouring Cities whose Cry was great, and their Sins very grievous. And 'tis remarkable, that God speaketh after such a Manner, as to intimate a Sort of
argu-

of FAMILIES recommended. 5

arguing with himself, whether he should reveal this Matter to *Abraham*, or no ; *Shall I hide from Abraham that Thing which I do*, v. 17. And then he is pleased to assign two Reasons why he would acquaint this his Favourite with his Design ; namely,

1. Because he was a peculiar Favourite of the God of Heaven. He was a Person for whom God had done much, and to whom God had promised more. *Abraham*, saith the Lord, *shall surely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him*, v. 18. And if we enquire into the Force of this Reasoning, it is plainly to be resolved into the Sovereign Grace and good Pleasure of God, *who will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy*: whose usual Method is this, to multiply his Favours on the Vessels of Mercy, all of which are free and undeserved.

2. Because *Abraham* was, and would be careful to communicate what he knew of the Will and Works of God unto his Children and Household after him. *For I know him*, saith God in my Text. *that he will command his Children and his Household after him*, &c. Some * would read my Text thus,

* Vid. *Fagii Translationum præcipuarum V. T. Collationem.*

6 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

thus, *I will make known* unto him [*Abraham*] what I do, to the end that he may command his Children, &c. But as the *Hebrew* Text, nor the most ancient Versions will not admit of this Reading; so it is a needless Alteration, and spoils the Sense in Part, which, according to our Translation, intimateth God's *Approbation* as well as his Knowledge of *Abraham's* pious Care, in the good Government of his Family: And on this Account, God was pleased to esteem him a very fit and proper Person, to be more fully informed of that tremendous Judgment, he was about to bring upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*; which was not only for the Punishment of those who then suffered, and a Warning to other Sinners who lived at or near that Time, but was to be a lasting Monument of God's Justice throughout all Generations; or in the Words of *St. Peter*, for an *Ensample unto those that afterwards should live ungodly*, 2 Pet. 2. 6. Now in Order to this, the Knowledge thereof must be transmitted down to Posterity, and that by *Oral Tradition*, till Writing should be invented or used, which was not till above 500 Years after; and who so fit to be intrusted with this Matter as *faithful Abraham*? who would remind his Children and Household after him of this amazing Judgment, and teach and command them to make a right Use thereof,

in

of FAMILIES recommended. 7

in particular, hereby to prevail on them to keep the Way of the Lord, and to do Justice and Judgment, that so the like Destruction might not overtake them, but on the contrary, the Lord might bring on them that which he had spoken of, and promised Abraham and his Seed.

In my Text, we may take Notice of three Things, viz.

1. The Thing it self, for which Abraham is so justly commended, and in which he ought to be imitated by us; namely, *His religious Care of his Family.* The Manner in which he manifested his Care, is thus expressed; He will command his Children and his Household: The Syriac Version reads it thus, He will exhort them: and the Septuagint useth a Word, that signifieth the right constituting and ordering of his Family: And the Meaning is this, Abraham would behave himself in a perfect Way, and walk within his House with a perfect Heart; as David resolved to do, Psal. 101. 1. As a Man of Knowledge, he would instruct his Household; and as a Man of Authority, he would command his Family. The principal Matter about which he gave Instructions and Commands, was the Business of Religion; that all under his Care and Charge, might keep the Way of the Lord, and do Justice and Judgment. And the Object of this

8 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

this Patriarch's Care, was his *whole Family*, which was very numerous; his *Children* are first mention'd, and his *Servants* are also included; for his *whole Household* were duly regarded by him.

2. God was well pleased with *Abraham's* Behaviour; which is the Meaning of the first Words, *I knew him*. This Phrase in Scripture often signifieth God's *Approbation*, and not only his single Knowledge, as when it is said, *the Lord knoweth them that are his*, 2 Tim. 2. 19. And *the Lord knoweth the Way of the Righteous*, Psal. 1. 6. God knoweth and observeth all the Families of the Earth, and seeth what is done therein; *The Lord looketh down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, to see if there be any that understand and seek God*, and taketh Notice of those Families, where nothing of Religion is to be found; wherein the Parents and Children, the Masters and Servants live like *Atheists*, or *as without God in the World*. His Eyes behold the Evil and the good. And where he finds such Families, as that of *Abraham*, he is well pleased, and doth highly approve of what is done there.

3. There was a great Advantage, which *Abraham* and his Household, yea and his Posterity also did, and should receive from this his Religious Care. As *Job* did not
fear

of FAMILIES recommended. 9

fear God for nought ; so neither did *Abraham*, nor shall any other Person or Family have just Reason to say, *it is in vain to serve the Lord*. The Benefits mention'd in my Text, are these, the *Perseverance* of *Abraham's* Posterity in the good Ways their Father train'd them up in ; and the *Accomplishment of the Promises* God had made to him and them. And 'tis observable, that *Abraham's* Care was a likely and *proper Method* to promote Piety and Probity in his Family, and among his Descendents, and therefore did he command them *that* (according to some ancient * Versions) *they should or might keep the Way of the Lord, &c.* This was also an *appointed Means* accompanied with a Promise ; and so we read in our Translation (to which agreeth that of the *Septuagint* and others) *they shall keep the Way of the Lord, &c.* As to the Accomplishment of God's Promises to *Abraham* and his Posterity ; that is plainly expressed in the last Words of my Text, and in such a Manner as to intimate that tho' *Abraham's* good Behaviour had nothing of Merit, yet that made him meet to obtain these Blessings, which free Grace had promis'd. And also, here is a plain Intimation of what concerns us to take special Notice

B of;

* Syriac, Arabick, Chald. Paraph.

10 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

of, that the Blessings of the Covenant are entailed upon *Abraham's* Posterity, with this Condition or *Proviso*; that if they do keep the Way of the Lord to do Justice and Judgment, *then* will God bring upon them that which he hath spoken of, or promised to them.

Upon the whole, let us Christians (the Spiritual Children of believing *Abraham*) for our Direction and Encouragement, make this *Observation*,

That the Religious Care of private Families is very pleasing to God, and for the Benefit of such Families and the Good of the World.

In discoursing on this Subject,

I. I will briefly acquaint you how this Religious Care of private Families should be exercised, especially with regard to the Children of the Family.

II. I will give you some of the Reasons why we may conclude, this Duty will be pleasing to God.

III. I will shew you what Benefits we may hope, will be the happy Consequences of a religious Education of our Children. And,

IV. I

of FAMILIES recommended. II

IV. I will conclude with such Application as will be suitable to the Discourse it self, and the Occasion of it.

And may the God of *Abraham*, and of *Isaac*, and of *Jacob*, the GOD of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Father of Glory, give unto us the SPIRIT of Wisdom, and Revelation in the Knowledge (or for the Acknowledgment) of him, and our Duty to him, in all the Relations and Conditions of this present Life. *Amen.*

I. I am briefly to acquaint you how the religious Care of private Families should be exercised, especially with Regard to the Children of the Family.

The Law which *Ahasuerus* made, that every Man should bear Rule in his own House, is agreeable to the natural and positive Law of God. It evidently belongs of Right to Parents and Masters, to order and govern their Families; as he that provideth not for his own, and specially those of his own House, hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel, 1 Tim. 5. 8. I shall principally confine my Discourse, to the religious Care in educating of Children, and Management of Youth. And tho' my Text points particularly to these two Things, good Instruction and Government of Families;

12 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

lies ; yet, we must not omit the Mention of *religious Worship*: particularly *Prayer* and *Praise* to God (which ought to be performed in Families every Morning and Evening) unless we are willing our Families should be like to, if not worse than those of the Heathen, on which God hath threatened to *pour out his Fury*, Jer. 10. 25. And 'tis remarkable that the pious *Patriarchs* who wandred as *Pilgrims on the Earth*, were careful to erect *Altars* to the Lord, and to call upon him, where-ever they pitched their *Tents*, and so lived as *Heirs of the Promise*, while they *dwelt in Tabernacles*, Heb. 11. 9.

(1.) There ought to be due Care to *instruct* Children and Youth, in the *Truths* and *Duties* of Religion. And tho' Parents are under special Obligations to do this kind Office for their Children, yet Servants, however their Condition among us may differ from that of *Abraham's Household*, as they ought to be provided for, and be under good Government, so they should be instructed also. *Let Masters* therefore in all respects, *give to their Servants that which is just and equal, knowing that they have a Master in Heaven*, Coloss. 4. 1.

As to the *Time*, when Parents should instruct their Children, as it should be very frequently and constantly ; *Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line,*
inc

of FAMILIES recommended. 13

Line upon Line, here a little and there a little, Isa. 28. 10. Teaching them diligently when they sit in the House, and walk by the Way, and lie down and rise up, Deut. 6. So Children should be taught the Way of the Lord betimes; whom shall he teach Knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand Doctrine? Them that are weaned from the Milk, and drawn from the Breasts, Isa. 28. 9. The young and tender Minds and Consciences of Children should be impress'd with a due Sense of Religion; and as their Capacities are enlarged by Degrees, so Divine Knowledge should encrease. And herein pious Mothers have a great Advantage, and Opportunity, to improve for the Good of their little ones; as it was Timothy's Happiness, that from a Child he had known the holy Scriptures; so an honourable Mention is made of his Grandmother and Mother, 2 Tim. 1. 5. who without Doubt, were careful to give him good Instruction very early.

As to the Method of teaching Children the Principles of Religion, none seems more proper than that we call *Catechising*, by Way of Question and Answer; not only, because, in those *Formularies* or *Compendiums*, the most plain and necessary Things are, or ought to be collected together from the *Holy Scriptures*, which is the sufficient and indeed the *only Standard* of Truth, and
Rule

14 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

Rule of Faith and Practice in Religion. But seeing Children are apt to be inquisitive, it is very convenient to teach them what they are most concern'd to enquire after, to put proper Questions into their Mouths, with suitable Answers. Many *Catechisms* have been drawn up by several excellent Persons, against which, however, it is no Wonder, seeing they are but *human Composes* of fallible Men, if there may be just Exceptions made against them, as being in some things defective, or too copious, and perhaps erroneous also. It is no Disparagement to others to say, that the *Assemblies shorter Catechism*, may be compared with them, not only as being a *Form of sound Words*, but also as being very fit to be taught Children, who, tho' at first they may not be able to understand *all* the Words or Things therein contained, will however have a good *Treasure* laid up in their Memories, and it may be in their Hearts also, that will be of Advantage to them during their whole Lives.

The *Subject Matter* of Instruction is principally to be regarded by us: As to which, we must in the first Place be careful, that we teach them only what is *true* and *good*; for according to the Nature of the Seed that is sown, such may we expect the Harvest will be: And then we should be careful also about the *Necessity*, or at least the
Use-

of FAMILIES recommended. 15

Usefulness of those Things we teach our Children. As we ought greatly to lament, that too many Parents train up their Children in the Principles of Atheism, Irreligion and Profaneness; and teach them, at least by their Example, to despise Religion, and make a Sport of Sin: So also it is to be bewailed, that some others also, know not *how to give good Things to their Children*; but teach them *Errors* instead of *Truth*, or feed their Minds with *airy Notions*, or byass them too much with *Party Principles*, and doubtful as well as needless Speculations, the Consequence of which is this, they afterwards turn *Scepticks*, or prove *Bigots* without good Understanding; and are superstitiously fond of, or averse to some outward Forms and Rites, the external Badges of a *Sect* or Party in Religion, with an uncharitable Heart condemning unto nothing less than eternal Flames, all those who differ from them. But thus to instruct Children, is *not to teach them the Way of the Lord, and to do Justice and Judgment*. Let us teach Children,

1. The Truths and Duties of *Natural Religion*, which is not contrary unto, but improved by Revelation. I mean such certain and necessary Truths, and Moral Virtues as are agreeable to, and may be known, in Part at least, by *Reason* or the *Light of Nature*. Some of the principal Truths we should

16 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

should inform them of are these, concerning the Being and Perfections of God and Providence; concerning our Relation to, and Dependance on God as our Creator, Preserver and Ruler; that God is Witness of all we do in this World, and will be our Judge, to render a righteous Recompense in another World. The *Duties* even of natural Religion, respecting God, our Neighbour and our selves are various, and many of them very plain. It is the Voice of Reason, as well as Scripture, *Micah 6. 8. That to do Justice and love Mercy, and to walk humbly with God, is good, and what the Lord doth require of us.* I shall speak more particularly of these Duties under the next Head. Therefore,

2. The Doctrines and Duties of *Revealed Religion*, and especially of *Christianity*, are what we should be very careful to teach our Children. For we must remember, we are *Christians*; and as Persons of all Religions are wont to train up their Children in that they profess, it would be a Shame to Christian Parents, not to instruct their Children in Christianity. Nor will it follow, that because some are thus brought up in a Fondness for the *worst* Religion, or what is a *false* Religion, that therefore our Children and Youth, should not be instructed in that which is the *only true*, and therefore certainly the *best* Religion. Now,

1. These

of FAMILIES recommended. 17

1. There are the *Doctrines* of Christianity, which should be taught and learned: The Truth of the *Gospel*, and of *Christ*, *i. e.* the Truths which Christ Jesus hath taught, and what particularly relate unto him. Children should be taught to know, and remember their *Redeemer*, as well as their *Creator*, in the Days of their Youth; and the Need they have of this *Saviour* from Sin and Wrath; because they are Sinners by Nature and Practice; and so odious to the Holiness, and obnoxious to the Justice of God: and they should know who this Redeemer is, both as the *Son of God*, and as the *Son of Man*; and what he hath done and suffered to save Sinners; they should be acquainted with the History of his *Birth*, *Life*, *Death*, *Resurrection* and *Ascension*; as also of his *Intercession* for us in Heaven; that he is the *only Mediator* between God and Men, and will be the *Judge* of Quick and Dead. They should be informed of the Nature of the *Covenant of Grace*, which is sealed by their *Baptism*, both as to the Duties and Privileges of it. They should know, that *Remission of Sin* can only be obtained from the meer Mercy of God, thro' the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and by Faith in his Blood. As they must be told they will die, so they must be taught they shall *rise again* from the Dead, and come to Judgment; that the *Wages of Sin*

18 The RELIGIOUS CARE

is Death, but the Gift of God is eternal Life.

And tho', the incomprehensible Mystery, the *Trinity* in the *Unity* of the Godhead, is, what the wisest of Men cannot fully understand; yet seeing the Children of believing Parents are, or ought to have been baptized into the *Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; they ought to be taught to believe, what the Holy Scriptures have plainly reveal'd to us, *That there is but one only, the living and true God; and that there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one God, the same in Substance, equal in Power and Glory:* Which I take to be a good Account of that Doctrine, agreeable to the Holy Scripture

2. The Duties of Christianity must also be known. And all the Duties of the *Moral Law* contained in the *Decalogue*, are enforced by the Example and Authority of our blessed Saviour, who *came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, Mat. 5, 17.* but on the contrary, hath explain'd the Precepts thereof in their just Extent, and Spiritual Meaning; and summed them up in these two, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. And thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self, Mat. 22. 37, 39.* Christianity doth oblige us
to

of FAMILIES recommended. 19

to keep these Commandments with *Sincerity*, from the best *Principles* and *Motives*, as also to the best *Ends*; with a constant Regard to Christ Jesus by a living Faith, for Assistance and Acceptance with God. St. Paul tells *Titus*, Chap. 2. 11, 12. That the Gospel, which he calls *the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, and hath appeared unto all Men, teacheth us, that denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World.*

Children and Youth therefore should be instructed in their Duty to love and fear, and trust in God at all Times; to serve and worship him in *Spirit*, and in *Truth*, by Prayer and Praise; to regard his Sabbath, and Ordinances for publick Worship; to read and hear his holy Word; and duly to regard the *two Sacraments* of the New Testament (which in a special Manner are Christian Institutions) Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They must also be taught, to reverence and obey their Parents, and other Governors, with the Duties they owe to all Men, *viz.* Justice and Charity, Truth and Chastity in all their Behaviour. And great Care should be taken to inform them thoroughly, of the Nature and Necessity of those two *Gospel Duties*, which are so suitable to our State as we are Sinners, and requisite in Order to our Salvation,

C 2

20 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

tion, namely, *Repentance toward God*; and *Faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2.) There ought to be a due Care in the *well-ordering* and governing of Children and Youth.

This many times is the most difficult, as well as most unpleasant Part of a Parents Duty: However, as the Authority of Parents, and Masters of Families, is unquestionable; so herein principally consisteth that Duty, which is thus expressed, Prov. 22. 6. *Train up a Child in the Way he should go.* And I think, our Care in this Matter, with Respect to *Religion* and *Virtue*, may be reduc'd to two Heads.

1. Endeavour to *restrain* Children and Youth, from wandring in the Ways of Vice and Wickedness. And if we duly consider the *Corruption* of their *Natures*, and the many *Temptations* and evil *Examples* they will meet with, we shall soon perceive, what Need they have of *Restraints*, and what a watchful Eye should be over them. The Difficulty is, how we shall be able to lay *due* Restraints upon them. Now, besides the constant Care, to keep them, as much as we can, from Temptations, and from evil Company, and bad Examples; it will be useful, to prevail upon them, as much as we can, to exercise that *Self-Denyal*, which is the Foundation of all Moral and Christian Virtue.

Teach

of FAMILIES recommended. 21

Teach them, to govern their Passions and Affections; which, if they are gratified in every thing, will hurry them into Mischief and Ruin. Train them up with paying a due *Regard to Conscience*: For nothing tends more to debauch the Manners of Men, than a Disregard to the Dictates and Reproofs of Conscience. Teach them the noble *Art of governing their Tongue*, which is an unruly Member, full of deadly Poyson; and in which, there is a World of Iniquity. Let the first Appearances of Sin, and all Approaches thereto, be duly animadverted upon.

2. Give all *due Encouragement* to a good and virtuous Temper and Behaviour. Children should be soon made sensible of the Difference there is between Moral good and evil, by the Carriage of their Parents, which ought to enduce them to love Virtue, for the Benefit they receive thereby; and to hate Vice, because of the evil Consequences thereof. Cherish in them, what you may perceive of an awful *Fear of God*, and due *Regard to Governors* on Earth. Train them up in *Modesty* and *Humility*: Encourage them in *Diligence* and *Industry*: Commend what you find of Love to *Justice* and *Benevolence*, *Temperance* and *Chastity*; and a *Regard to Truth* and *Religion*. In a Word, Let not those Things, which are pleasing to God,
and

22 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

and praise-worthy among Men, want *Ap-
probation* and *Encouragement* in your
Children.

And remember, that in Order to restrain
from Vice, and encourage Virtue; besides
the *Authority* you have to command, the
two great Instruments of Moral Govern-
ment are in your Hands, and must be
prudently made use of: I mean, *Punish-
ments* and *Rewards*. Therefore,

1. You must prudently give *Corrections*,
with this Design chiefly, to *prevent* Faults
for the *future*, rather than to *punish* for
Faults that are *past*. And when you make
your Children sensible of this, they will
the more easily apprehend, and believe,
your Chastening of them proceeds from
Love, and will the more likely receive
Benefit thereby. The foolish *Lenity* and
Indulgence of Parents sometimes proves
the Ruin of their Children; as also, there
may be too great *Severity*, by which they
are discouraged. Fond Indulgence of a
Child in a Fault, is *Hatred*, and not *Love*.
If we may believe the Scriptures, *He that
spareth the Rod, hateth his Son; but he that
loveth him, chasteneth him betimes.* Prov. 13.
14. And we are told expressly, *That Foo-
lishness is bound up in the Heart of a Child,
and the Rod of Correction shall drive it out
from him.* Prov. 22. 5. And therefore Pa-
rents are exhorted, to *chasten their Son,*
while

of FAMILIES recommended. 23

while there is Hope, and not to spare for his Crying. Prov. 19. 18. And they have Encouragement to hope, That if they withhold not Correction from the Child, but beat him with the Rod, he shall not die, but that his Soul shall be delivered from Hell. Prov. 22. 13, 14. In a Word, The Rod and Reproof giveth Wisdom, but a Child left to himself, bringeth his Mother to Shame. Prov. 29. 15. It is thought, the Mother is mentioned *emphatically* ; because, she many times (but not always) is most faulty in this fond Indulgence ; and therefore the Shame and Grief of it, doth justly fall upon her.

2. You should also give due Rewards and Encouragements, to a good and virtuous Behaviour.

As some Parents are negligent, in correcting their Children for their Faults ; so others are to blame, because they take no notice, or do not reward what is good and commendable in them. For tho' it is true, that *Virtue is its own Reward* ; yet, this Maxim will have little Power, especially upon Children. Parents therefore should make them sensible by *due Encouragements*, how pleasing their good Actions are to them, as well as profitable to themselves. As to this Matter, you should be very careful, not to cherish *Vice*, while you pretend to encourage *Virtue*: And I think,

24 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

think, the best Encouragement you can give to your Children, is, to let them find by Experience, that a steady Course of Obedience and Virtue, is a sure Way to remain the Objects of your most endeared Affection; and to obtain such proper Tokens of your Favour, as shall afford them Pleasure and Profit; as also to let them know, this is the *most likely* Method, to live usefully and comfortably in *this* World; as it is the *only one* to be happy in the *other* World, to all Eternity.

Under this Head of well-ordering and governing of Children and Youth, let me subjoin two things, that ought to be greatly regarded.

1. There must be a due Consideration of the Temper and Disposition of those, who are under your Care. And these are almost as various, as the Features of their several Faces. It is very plain, that some have better natural Capacities, than others, to receive Instruction, and grow in Knowledge: And 'tis likewise evident, some are more mild and soft, more tender and tractable, than others, whose Temper is rough and rugged, whose Spirits are haughty, and headstrong; and great Prudence is requisite to behave a-right towards these different Dispositions. One thing I would particularly recommend as to all Sorts: That
Parents

of FAMILIES recommended. 25

Parents endeavour to preserve and cherish a due *Mixture* of *Love* and *Fear*, in their Children, towards them at all times.

2. There should be great Care always, to set a good Example before Children and Youth.

We know, the World is govern'd more by Example, than Precept; and Inferiours are apt to imitate their Superiours: Children especially, affect to do, as they see their Parents do. Let there be therefore great Care, to set a *good Example*, to avoid not only what is sinful in it self, but the using of too great a *Freedom*, even in some lawful things before Children; especially, while they are young, and unable to know the exact Limits of good and evil; because, they may take Occasion and Encouragement, from what they see their Parents do, to exceed in lawful things, and to do that which is worse.

II. The Second General of this Discourse, is, to give you some of the Reasons, why we may conclude, that this Duty will be pleasing to God.

It is evident from my Text, that God approved of *Abraham's* Behaviour in this Respect; and 'tis reasonable to hope, he will be well pleased with us, if we imitate this good Example; and if *we know*;

D

how

26 The RELIGIOUS CARE

how we ought to walk and to please God, we should abound more and more, 1 Thess.

4. 1. This ought to be our constant Ambition and Endeavour, that *whether we are present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 2 Cor. 5. 9.* Now it will appear, that a religious Care of our Families is pleasing to God; Because,

1. This is our Duty, which God hath commanded, and our Performance thereof is an Act of Obedience. And we know what Samuel said to Saul, 1 Sam. 15. 22. *That to obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the Fat of Rams.* A steady Course of humble and sincere Obedience, to the Will of God, from right Principles and to good Ends, is the best Method we can take to please God. That God hath commanded us this Duty, is very plain; not only from the *written Word* of God, in the Old and New Testament, as Deut. 6. 6, 7. *These Words which I command thee this Day, shall be in thy Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* And Eph. 6. 4. *Ye Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath, but bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* And it is observable, that the fourth Command of the Decalogue, seems directed

to

of FAMILIES recommended. 27

to Parents and Masters of Families; requiring their Care, not only to sanctify God's Sabbath themselves; but also to restrain their *Sons and their Daughters; their Men-Servants and Maid-Servants*, from profaning that holy Day. And we may look upon the Counsel of the wise Man to be a Command from God, *to train up a Child in the Way he should go.* Prov. 22. 6. But this seemeth to be Part of the *Law of Nature*, that is written upon the Heart of Man: For *Reason* will tell us, that God is the *Founder* of Families, and the *Governour and Benefactor* of these lesser Societies, as well as *King among the Nations*. He setteth the Solitary in Families, the Fruit of the Womb is his Reward. He appointeth to all Men the Bounds of their Habitation; and of him all the Family in Heaven and Earth is named. How reasonable then is it, that Families should be instructed and governed after such a manner, as may promote the Glory and Honour of the Great GOD? Besides, God hath invested Parents and Masters with that Authority, which they have over Children and Servants; and if this be not exercised according to his Will, and for his Glory; tho' I will not say, it is so far forfeited, that Inferiours do not owe Subjection and Obedience; yet those have little Reason to expect God will maintain and

28 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

preserve their Honour, who do not regard his Glory. Memorable to this purpose, are the Words of God to *Eli*, whose Crime was this, that *he honoured his Sons above God*. Wherefore, thus said the Lord, *Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.* 1. Sam. 2. v. 30.

2. This Duty, when it is performed aright, will prove greatly for the *Benefit of the World*, and therefore we may conclude it is pleasing to God.

The Providence of God, is concerned about the Affairs of private Persons and Families; yet, so ordereth Things, that the Good of *Nations*, and the *World* in general, should be promoted: And, because it is reasonable, to prefer the *Publick Good* before a *private Benefit*, we may justly esteem a Man's true Love to his Country is pleasing unto God. And as Men of publick Spirits and Usefulness, are Blessings to the World, so they are the peculiar Care of Heaven. Now there is no Way, wherein Persons in a private Station, can do so much good to the World, as by the good Education of Children and Youth; and the well ordering of private Families.

Kingdoms and Nations are made up of private Families; and if these are prosperous, the Nations are happy; if these are regular,

of FAMILIES recommended. 29

regular, the Nation will be so too: And, let it be remembred, that the Governours of these little Societies may do more, in Order to the Welfare of a Nation than it may be, publick Magistrates can. I am sure the Magistrates Care will be ineffectual for publick Reformation or Benefit, without the Care of Parents and Masters. Besides, remember, what I am exhorting you to, is one of these *Relative Duties*; the Duty God requires of you, in your particular Station and Condition in the World; which, upon that Account, is pleasing to the God of Order, who hath appointed all his Servants their proper *Stations*, and their proper *Work*. And it is upon this Account as well, as for other Reasons, the *Obedience of Children* to their Parents, is said to be *well pleasing to the Lord*; and that of *Servants* to their Masters, is *serving the Lord Christ*. Coloss. 3. 22, 24. So we may conclude, if Parents and Masters perform their *relative Duties*, as also is *fit in the Lord*, this will be well pleasing unto him.

3. The right Performance of this Duty, is the best Way, to advance Religion and the *Honour of God in the World*, at present, and to Posterity; and therefore we may conclude, 'tis pleasing to God. God hath made, and doth manage all Things for his Glory; and this is our chief *End*, and should be our main *Business* in the World,
the

30 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

the more we spread and proclaim the *Glo-*
ry of God, the more we *please* God here;
 and the more sure we are to *enjoy* him
 for ever. Let it therefore be considered,
 that as the Performance of all *relative* Du-
 ties, tend's greatly for the *Credit of Reli-*
gion ; so this Duty of religious governing
 of private Families, is the most likely Me-
 thod to keep up the Life and Power of
 Religion in the World ; and transmit the
 same to Generations to come. Were our
 Houses like those of *Aquila and Priscilla* ; of
Nymphas and Philemon ; little Churches of
Christ ; then the Churches of Christ *properly*
so called, would be more increased and edi-
 fied. This would be a pleasing Prospect,
 with Respect to future Generations. We
 might with Pleasure look upon the rising
 Generation, did we use more Care in the
 Education of Youth ; and could we see
 Hopes of good Success in our pious Endea-
 vours this way.

My Text taketh particular Notice of
Abraham's Care, about his Children and
 Household *after him*. This good Man was
 not willing, that Religion should be buried
 with him in his Grave : And what good
 Man is there, who would not desire, that
 his Children may be serving God on Earth,
 when he is praising God in Heaven ?
 That such Care with Reference to Poste-
 rity, is pleasing to God, is plain from his
 Insti-

of FAMILIES recommended. 31

instituting the great Ordinance of the *Passover*, to perpetuate the Remembrance of his Goodness *from Generation to Generation*; and his Command, to instruct Children in the Nature and Design thereof. Read the Command of God to his ancient People, *Exod. 12. 26, 27. It shall come to pass, when your Children shall say unto you, What mean you by this Service? that you shall say, It is the Sacrifice of the Lords Passover, who passed over the Houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our Houses.* And should not our Children be instructed, that *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*, and be trained up in the Belief of, and due Regard to our far greater Redemption by Christ, than that of the *Israelites*, from *Egyptian* Bondage. It was for this End, that many Things are left upon Record, in the Holy Scriptures; that the *Generations to come might praise the Lord.*

4. The Consideration of those *special Favours*, God hath vouchsafed to such Persons and their Families, who have been careful about this Duty, shews, that God is pleased therewith.

We must own, that all God's Favours are free; that there is nothing of *Merit* in the best of Men, or their best Actions; yet there are the *Rewards of Grace* in
this

32 The RELIGIOUS CARE

this World, as well, as that which is to come: And Experience hath proved oftentimes, that God hath had a particular Regard for Holy Men, and their Families. He hath blessed them, and the Children have been loved for their *Father's* sake. Solomon's Observation hath been often verified; *That the Curse of the Lord is in the House of the Wicked; but he bleisseth the Habitation of the Just.* Prov. 3. 33. How remarkably did God bless the Family of Abraham, which was not only very numerous, but very prosperous too. Not only was Isaac blessed, who was the Son of the Promise; but God said to Abraham, Gen. 17. 20. *As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him.*—And long before his Days, how great was the Salvation of Noah and his House, Gen. 6. 13. Heb. 11. 7. As also in his Time, how great was God's Favour to righteous Lot, and to his Family. Memorable are the Angels Words to him, Gen. 19. 12. *Hast thou any here besides Sons in law, and thy Sons, and thy Daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the City, bring them out of this Place.* It is said, 2 Sam. 6. 12. *That the Lord blessed the House of Obed-Edom, because of the Ark of God.* The right Performance of this Duty may be a Means, to preserve Cities and Kingdoms from Ruin: Had there been Ten righteous Per-
sons

of FAMILIES recommended. 33

sons in Sodom, that City would have been spared for *their sake*; and much more, had there been many righteous *Families*. Except the Lord of Hosts had left us a very small Remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like to Gomorrha. Psal. 1. 9. However, God may yet deal with our Nation and the Cities and Towns thereof; Let us let up, and keep up the Worship of God in our *Houses*, and take due Care of our *Families*; and we may hope, no Plague shall come near our Dwellings: That God will cause his Angels, to encamp around them, to preserve us from *Flames* and *Storms*, from *Thieves* and *Robbers*: Let us with David resolve, to walk in our Houses, with a perfect Heart; and to make the Lord our Refuge, the Most High our Habitation, and then let us consider for our Comfort those Promises, among many others, in the 29 Ps. v. 5, 6, 7. Thou shalt not be afraid for the Terror by Night; nor for the Arrow, that flieth by Day; nor for the Pestilence, that walketh in Darkness; nor for the Destruction, that wasteth at Noon-Day. A thousand shall fall at thy Side, and ten thousand at thy right Hand, but it shall not come nigh thee.

34 The RELIGIOUS CARE

III. The *Third* thing I propounded, is to shew you, what Benefits we may hope, will be the happy Consequences of a religious Education of our Children.

I have, in part, prevented my self as to this Matter, by what is already said; and therefore shall not enlarge so much, as it is easy to do: There are only two Things, I will mention,

I. This is the most likely Method, to promote the Welfare of Children, both in this World, and the next: For *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.* 1 Tim. 4. 8.

They are without *natural Affections*, who do not desire and endeavour the Welfare of their Children; and very few such *Monsters* in Nature are to be found, tho' there are not very many, who do not mistake in the Methods they take to obtain this End. The Generality of People imagine, if they can but procure large Estates for their Children, and leave them good Inheritances, then they must of necessity be happy; not considering, that *Wisdom is good, with an Inheritance*; and that a large Inheritance is good for little, without Wisdom to make a good Use of it; and so, as to give Account of it, at last. And God
bath

of FAMILIES recommended. 35

hath said unto Men, Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from Evil, is Understanding. Job. 28. v. 28. If therefore we may hope, that by the Blessing of God, our good Endeavours shall be so successful, that our Children shall keep the Way of the Lord, and do Justice and Judgment; then will the Lord be their Portion, and they will have a goodly Heritage. And we may hope, that if we train up a Child in the Way, he should go, when he is old, he shall not depart from it. Prov. 22. 6. Which last Words, I think, may be esteemed, as a Promise of God; as well as the whole Verse is one of the Proverbs of Solomon; which certainly is preferable, and more likely to be true, than that spiteful one, which the Devil hath taken Care, to make current, to the Discouragement of early Piety; *a young Saint, and an old Devil.* And, Thanks be to God! all Ages have produced many, that have, like Obadiab, *feared the Lord, from their Youth;* and at length, died in a good old Age; with a Crown of Glory, in the Way of Righteousness. And, I doubt not, but God hath blessed oftentimes a religious Education, by making it an effectual Means, of planting the Principles of real and lasting Religion. I am sure, such as have this Privilege, are in the most fair, and likely Way, to obtain God's special and saving Grace;

36 The RELIGIOUS CARE

And 'tis good, that serious and religious Thoughts, should take the *Possession* of the Heart, betimes; and that good *Habits* and *Customs*, obtain very soon; and this, I am sure of, that by a religious Education, Such a Hedge is planted round about Children, that they cannot easily break through; and when they attempt to do so, will, as it were, find the *Thorns*, and *Briars*, to enter into their Flesh: I mean, the Reluctance, or the Remorse of their Consciences, will wound them to the very Quick. Let Parents then bring up their Children in Hope, that they will prove Blessings to the World, and live comfortably in it; and at length die happily out of it, and leave a Seed behind them, that shall be counted to the Lord for a Generation. This, at least is very evident, that, if a good Education is wanting, Children are most likely to be sottishly ignorant, and sordidly wicked: They will easily fall a Prey to Seducers, of all Sorts, and live like Beasts, or which is worse, act like Devils.

2. This is the only Way, for Parents themselves, to have Peace at present, or Comfort in the great Day, in Case their Children should miscarry.

And, alas! it must be owned, that the Children of *Abraham*, do sometimes prove the Children of *Belial*. Too many, if God pleased, have in all Ages, forsaken the

of FAMILIES recommended. 37

the good Ways of the Lord, that they were trained up in; and many times it is with a *heavy Heart*, that pious Parents look upon, or think of their Children, as begotten, or brought forth by them, for the *Destroyer*. It maketh them fetch many a deep *Sigh*, and shed many *Tears*, to think, that such, as they have often most delightfully embraced, and tendered, as the Apple of their Eye, must be banished for ever from the Presence of God, and doom'd to everlasting Flames. It is grievous to them, when they find *ungrateful* Returns made to them, by *undutiful* Children; so see their *surly* Looks; to hear their *churlish* Words; and observe their *untoward* Temper, and ill Behaviour: But it cuts them to the very Heart, when they think of their Disobedience unto *God*, and how dreadful the Consequence of this is like to be *at last*. This indeed pierces and paineth them, like a Dagger, at their very Hearts. Now, in so sad a Case, as this, I know of nothing in all the World, that can relieve, or comfort distressed Parents, like this, the *Testimony of their Consciences*, that in *Simplicity*, and *godly Sincerity*, they have from time to time performed their Duty, with Respect to their Children.

Then as to the Account, we must give, in the great Day, and the Recompense
we

38 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

we shall receive in the other World, let it comfort holy Parents, to consider the Words of the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. 49. 4, 5. which, with little Alteration, they may make their own: *Tho' I have laboured in vain, and spent my Strength for nought; yet surely, my Judgment is with the Lord, and my Work with my God. Tho' Israel (tho' my Children) be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my Strength.*—Whereas on the contrary, how dreadful must the Charge be, if it should lie against us, at the Bar of God; that we have been the *Murderers of the Souls of our own Children!* How dreadful will the Cries of some against their negligent and wicked Parents be, when in the midst of Torments they shall *upbraid* the tormented Parents also, in such Language, as this: A *bloody* Father; or a *bloody* Mother hast thou been to me. Ah! *cruel Creatures*, to your *own Offspring*, never to *warn* me of this *Place of Torment*; never to *tell* me of a *Saviour*, and the *Way*, to escape this *Wrath to come*; which, tho' 'tis come, will be yet to come for ever; never to *restrain* me, when it was greatly in your Power, from the Paths of Vice, that lead down to these Chambers of Death. O *curst Indulgence*, to indulge me to my everlasting Ruin! But
this

of FAMILIES recommended. 39

this is too melancholy a Subject, to dwell upon further, than is necessary. God of his infinite Mercy grant, that none of us may find this Misery, which is far greater, than Words can express.

IV. It only remains, that I conclude with such *Application*, as is futable to the Discourse it self, and the Occasion of it.

The preceeding Discourse, should be seriously considered, and improved by two Sorts of Persons, *viz.* They that are Parents of Children; and such, as have had a religious Education. Therefore,

(1.) Let Parents learn, to imitate the the good Example in my Text. Indeed, all are concerned to think on such Things, as have been mention'd, who have the Charge of Families, and Care of Youth, committed to them; yea, and such, who as yet are unmarried, and, as we speak, have none but themselves to care for, would do well, to consider before-hand, whether they are able and willing, to discharge such a Trust, as is committed to them, when they take upon them the Care of a Family. But I would principally urge upon the *Consciences* of Parents, their Duty to their Children, according to the foregoing Account thereof: And besides the Arguments, contained in what hath

40 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

hath been said, to shew, that this Duty is pleasing to God, and attended with several Benefits. Let it be considered,

1. That Parents are under *special Obligations*, to perform this Duty. For not only (as hath been shewn) is this required of them by the *positive* Law of God, and the *Law of Nature*; so that careless and negligent Parents are cruel to their Offspring, as the *Ostrich* in the Wilderness, *which leaveth her Eggs in the Earth, and forgetteth, that the Foot may crush them, or that the wild Beast may breake them; and is hardened against her young ones.* Job. 39. 14, 15, 16. But *Revelation* further informs us, that Parents are the *Instruments*, of conveying to their Children a *depraved Nature*, that *hereditary Disease of our Souls*; from whence we are prone, to transgress, and go *a-stray from the Womb*; inclin'd to do evil, and averse to that which is good. How earnestly then should Parents seek after a *Cure*, for their Children; and endeavour as well, as pray, that they may be *born again*, and be made *Partakers of a divine Nature*, John 3. 3, 5, 7. 2 Pet. 1. 4. That they should *not be conformed to this World*, in the Vices or Vanities thereof; but *transformed by the renewing of their Minds, &c.* Rom. 12. 2.

of FAMILIES recommended. 41

2. Parents are under *special Engagements* to this Duty. *The Vows of God* are upon them. Christians have solemnly promised to perform all known Duties; and *relative Duties* among the rest: And such Parents, in particular, when they offered their Children to God, in *Holy Baptism*, not only laid them under Engagements, to be the Lords; but they did virtually hereby, if not expressly also, promise, to bring them up in the *Nurture and the Admonition of the Lord*. And if any think it convenient, to require other Persons, to be *Sureties* for the good Education of Children; yet Parents are not hereby excused from their Duty: Nor is it all that we owe to our Children, to *dedicate* them to God; we must also *educate* them for God. Some are, it may be, Children of Prayers, and Vow's in a more particular Manner, as was *Samuel*; and how forcible is the Exhortation of *Solomon's Mother* in these Words, Prov. 31. 23. *What my Son? and what the Son of my Womb? and what the Son of my VOWS?* Give not thy Strength unto Women, &c.

3. Parents have *special Advantages* for the Performance of this Duty.

They are, or ought to be *frequently with them*, unless they are willing, to lose the Opportunity of doing them good, as well as taking Delight in them themselves.

F

They

42 The RELIGIOUS CARE

They have such Opportunities of *observing* their *Temper* and *Behaviour*, as may direct them, in giving needful as well as *seasonable* Counsel, and Caution, and Reproof. They have a thousand Ways of *engaging* their *Affections* of Love and Fear, without which a Parent's Authority and Influence is like to be very small. They have the Power of *Rewards* and *Punishments* at hand; and the *Fear* or *Hopes* of *hereafter*, will sway very much with most Children; more it may be, than a Sense of Duty or Gratitude for the present, or what is past.

4. Parents have *special Inclinations* and Desires for the Welfare of their Children. There is no Affection so strong, as that we find among all Animals, for the Preservation of their Young: Now Reason and Religion in Men should regulate, and improve; and not destroy the Affections of their animal Nature. We find by Experience, that most Men will toil and labour, and abridge themselves of many Conveniences and Delights of Life, for the *temporal* Benefit of their Children: And should not Religion teach us, to desire and endeavour after their *spiritual* and *eternal* Welfare? What, all this affectionate Concern for the *Bodies*, and little or none for the *Souls* of your Children? What, so much Care, and Cost, and Pains, to make your Children prosperous in *this* World; and

no

of FAMILIES recommended. 43

no Thoughts, nor Care, about their Happiness in the *other* World?

5. Parents have a *special Interest* of their own, in the Welfare of their Children. The powerful Motive of *Interest*, and Principle of *Self-Love* so deeply rooted in our Natures, should prevail with Parents, to take due Care of their Children. Usually they esteem, what is done to them, as done to themselves; and to count, that their Happiness consists in the Welfare of their Children, nay almost *Life it self*; as *Judah* said, of his Father *Jacob*, *His Life is bound up in the Lad's Life*. Gen. 44. 30. And in particular, the Honour, or Credit of Parents, depends much upon the Virtue and Probity of their Children; *As Arrows are in the Hands of a mighty Man, so are Children of the Youth. Happy is the Man, that hath his Quiver full of them. They shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the Enemy in the Gate.* Psal. 127. 4, 5. Thus it is, when Children prove wise and good. But if they prove otherwise, as a wise Son maketh a glad Father; so a foolish Son is the *Heaviness* of his Mother. Prov. 10. 1. And he that wasteth his Father, and chaseth away his Mother, is a Son, that causeth Shame, and bringeth Reproach. Prov. 19. 26. Many will reproach the sorrowful and distressed Parents; and the *Pity* of their Friends it may be, will be mixed with Reproach also;

44 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

and it is this, makes them sometimes like *Job*, to be *weary of their Lives*, and to lay with him, Chap. 10. 1. *I will leave my Complaint upon my self.*

6. Parents must give a particular Account in the great Day, how they have performed this Duty; and receive a futable Reward. The *God of the Spirits of all Flesh*; the *Father of our Spirits*, who we hope will also *adopt* us, and our Children for his own, speaketh, as it were, to Parents, and giveth them a Charge, like as *Pharaoh's Daughter* to the Mother of *Moses*, Exod. 2. 7. *Take this Child, and nurse it; bring it up, for me, and I will give thee thy Wages.* Oh! that we may give up this our Account with Joy, and not with Grief. And, how great will the mutual Joy of holy Parents, and godly Children be in that great Day? Parents may delight in their pious Children on a double Account here below; because they are *God's Children* as well as *theirs*: They have *God's Image* as well as their own: They mutually delight in each others Company and Happiness here; but how joyful will their Meeting be hereafter, and how happy their Converse together in Heaven, for ever. How joyful for Parents, to say in that Day, *Lo, here am I, and the Children, thou hast graciously given me.*

(2.) Let

of FAMILIES recommended. 45

(2.) Let such Children and Youth, as have had the great Happiness of a *religious Education*, especially the Children of *holy Parents*, rightly improve the foregoing Discourse.

In my Address to you, I can truly say as the Apostle to the *Corinthians*, 2 Ep. 6, 11. *My Mouth is full, my Heart is enlarged*, I have neither Room, nor Ability, to say all that my affectionate Concern for you, doth incline me to say. However,

1. Let me prevail with you, to be *thankful to God*, for the Privileges of your *Birth*. You are the Children of the *Covenant*, made with *Abraham* and his Seed; to you *pertaineth the Adoption*, and the *Promises*: You are of the *spiritual Stock of Abraham*; on such Accounts as these, your Privileges are greater than to be born of what in the Estimation of the World is *noble Blood*; and this is by the peculiar Favour of God, who *appointeth unto all Men the Bounds of their Habitation*. Now look to it *diligently*, lest there be among you any *profane Person*, as *Esau*, who for one *Morsel of Meat* sold his *Birth-Right*. Do not make light of your *spiritual Privileges*; but while you are thankful for many *temporal Advantages* of your *Parentage* and *Birth* that you enjoy; forget not those of a *spiritual Nature*, which do as far exceed the

46 The RELIGIOUS CARE

the former, as the *Soul* is preferable to the *Body*, or *Heaven* to be esteem'd above this *Earth*.

2. Be thankful to *God* and your *Parents*, for the Care that hath been shewn of you in your good Education. You are bound, to be thankful to your *Parents*, as *Instruments* in the Hand of *Providence*, tho' herein they did no more, than was their Duty to do: And your highest Praises ought to be given to the *God* of all *Grace*. If you have any *Ingenuity*, you will be thankful, that your naked Bodies have been cloathed, and hungry Bellies filled; and your ignorant and rude Minds have been informed and cultivated above these, who are most barbarous and brutish. That your Parents have been able and willing, to give you what is called a *genteel* or a *liberal* Education; and it may serve to excite your *Thankfulness* to *God*, and *Gratitude* to your Parents, when you observe many Spectacles of Misery, who are most wretched for the Want of what you have enjoyed. 'Tis certainly true, that Children on some Account are more beholden to their Parents for their good Education, than for bringing them into the World. But if you have any *Sense* of Religion on your Minds; if you have any *Love* to *God* and *Goodness* in your Hearts, you will be especially thankful for the unspeakable
Ad.

of FAMILIES recommended. 47

Advantages of a religious Education; and to excite you thereto, let me offer to your Consideration, the many miserable Objects, that may too commonly be found, who are miserable here, and like to be so for ever, becaule in the Words of a Great Men *

“ Their Parents train them up for Ruin
“ and Destruction; in the Service of the
“ Devil, and in the Trade and Mystery of
“ Iniquity: Who instead of teaching them
“ the Fear of the Lord, infuse into them
“ the Principles of Atheism, and Irreligion,
“ and Profaness: Instead of teaching them
“ to love and reverence Religion, they
“ teach them to hate and despise it, and to
“ make a Mock both of Sin and Holiness:
“ Instead of training them up in the Know-
“ ledg of the Holy Scriptures, which are able
“ to make Men, wise to Salvation, they
“ do edificare ad Gehennam; they edi-
“ fy them for Hell; by teaching them, to
“ prophane that Holy Book, and to abuse
“ the Word of God, which they ought to
“ tremble at, by turning it into Jest and
“ Raillery: Instead of teaching them to
“ pray and to bless the Name of God, they
“ teach them, to blaspheme that great and
“ terrible Name, and to prophane it by their
“ continual Oaths and Imprecations: And
“ instead

* Arch-Bishop Tilletson. Sermon on Prov. 22. 6.

48 The RELIGIOUS CARE

“ instead of bringing them to God’s
 “ Church, they carry them to the Devil’s
 “ Chapels, to Play-Houses, and Places of
 “ Debauchery; those Schools and Nurseries
 “ of Lewdness and Vice.

3. The principal Thing I would persuade you to, is, to be very careful, *that you receive not this Grace of God in vain.* See to it, that you do not cut off the *Entail* of Covenant Blessings from your selves and your Posterity also, by your wicked Lives, and Actions contrary to the good Principles and Precepts you have receiv’d. Think on the Words of David, to his Son Solomon, 1 Chron. 28. 9. *Thou Solomon, my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind; for the Lord searcheth all Hearts, and understandeth all the Imaginations of the Thoughts: If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.* The latter Words in my Text are thought to be conditional; that God would bring up-*on Abraham’s Posterity the Thing, the good Things, he had spoken of, if his Children and Household after him did keep the Way of the Lord.*

How many *Prodigals* do foolishly and wickedly squander away their *Patrimony*, and waste large Estates; the *Inheritances* of their *Ancestors*: And what is yet more
 to

of FAMILIES recommended. 49

to be lamented, how many may be found, that have forfeited, and are destitute of what was once the *Glory of their Ancestors, COVENANT BLESSINGS*. Our Saviour tells us, *many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer Darkness, Matth. 8. 11, 12.* It followeth, *There shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth*; and none will weep and wail; none will be more grievously tormented, than these *Children of the Kingdom*, when they are cast out. Think, O think, before it is too late, and may it be to good Purpose, will any of you be the only Persons, that go to Hell out of your Families? Are you willing, to be eternally banished from all your near and dear Relations, at as great a Distance, as between Heaven and Hell? Time was, at least you were afraid of a *Father's Eye* and Resentment; perhaps the Sighs and Tears of your Parents have sometimes touched your Hearts: You have been at times delighted with their Smiles, and joyful in their Presence. But how will you be able to see them in the great Day? How will you be then confounded, if they must appear as Witnesses against you, and applaud the righteous Sentence of *Condemnation* passed upon you.

G

What

50 *The* RELIGIOUS CARE

What hath been said under this Head, should also be consider'd and applied with some little Alteration by such Children, as are by the Kindness of well disposed Persons, brought up in *Charity-Schools*, with a due Regard to the great Principles and Duties of the Christian Religion. The mentioning of this, leads me to a second Branch of my Application, as suitable to the *Occasion* of this Discourse.

Schools

I was desired to preach and print this Sermon, for the Benefit of one of the oldest *Charity-Schools* (the *very first*, as I am informed, among the *Dissenters*) of which there are now such great Numbers in this Nation: But the Design of this' and other Sermons of this kind, is not only, nor chiefly, to *make charitable Collections*, or obtain Gifts, for defraying the Charge of such Schools: There is a further End, principally to be aimed at, namely, the giving proper Directions and Motives from the *Word of God*, for the right Management of this *Charity*, so as that it may turn to the best Account at last, of all that are concerned therein. And as I have had this in View all along. So in the Conclusion,

1. Let me address my self to *them*, who have the Management of these *Charity-Schools*, and the *Tuition* of the Children, belonging thereto. And as I am bound
to

of FAMILIES recommended. 51

to commend your *Labours of Love*; and pray to God, that you may not lose your Reward; so let me persuade you, not only to regard the *temporal* Welfare of the Children, taken under your Care, in cloathing their Bodies, and giving them such Education at present, as well as by putting them out Apprentices hereafter, to honest Employments; but to take the most effectual Care for the training them up in *Christian Knowledge*, and the Love and Practice of real Goodness: And as you should narrowly observe their *Morals*, in the whole of their Behaviour, and particularly in their *Words*; so let the most deserving in this Respect, always receive the first and greatest Favours from you. I am afraid, too many Masters and Mistresses of these School's are too negligent in this Matter; and the ill Behaviour of many of these Children, when out of the Schools, is a great Discouragement to many, in contributing to the Maintenance of them: And it is to be feared, may hinder the *Blessings of Heaven*, from descending so freely, as otherwise might be hoped for.

And there is one Thing further, you should be most especially careful about, That you do not turn these *Charity-Schools* into *Nurseries* of the very worst *Uncharitableness*. If party Zeal be infused

52 The RELIGIOUS CARE

into Children, under Pretence of fortifying them against *Schism*, or a *Veneration* for outward *Garbs*, and *Rites*, and *Ceremonies* of Religion, and a *Fondness* for some *dividing Names* among Christians and Protestants, are taught Children, instead of vital Religion and real Goodness; It must not be wondered at, if Men of the *best Disposition*, as well as of the *greatest Ability* to do good, do so far dread the Consequences of such Proceedings, as to refuse their helping Hand in the sowing the Seeds of so much future Mischief.

2. Let me conclude with earnest Exhortations to *other Persons*, that they would promote this good Work, of religiously and virtuously Educating those Children, whose Parents are not able, or willing to do this great Kindness for them. I would willingly hope, that notwithstanding all Objections to the contrary (how just soever some of them may be) much good is, and will be done by the Multitude of such Schools in the Kingdom, and that these will prove a *happy Omen*: I believe this Way, God in his wise and good Providence, will *even of Stones raise up Children to Abraham*; and from the most unlikely Families, he will call some to himself, that shall supply the Room of the many *degenerate Plants* to be found in our Day. As *all Sorts* of Persons should wil-

of FAMILIES recommended. 53

willingly contribute to this good Work, so especially, should they do this, who themselves *have had a good Education*, and know by happy Experience the great and many Advantages thereof; and they also, who *have no Children of their own*, should thus far *adopt* the Children of the Poor, as to help forward their good Instruction in Righteousness: They also, that *have large Estates*, more it may be, than they know well what to do with, or how they shall well account for, among *other* charitable Works, should take this into their Consideration. Whilst I would persuade them, to engage in this Affair, who *never yet* have concerned themselves herein, let me desire those, who *have been long* employed in this *Labour of Love*, and indeed are *ready to every good Work*, to remember the Words of the Apostle, Gal. 6. 9, 10. *Let us not be weary of well-doing, for in due Season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore Opportunity, let us do good unto all Men, especially unto them, who are of the Household of Faith.* Amen.

F I N I S.





POSTSCRIPT.

THE CHARITY-SCHOOL in *Gravel-Lane* in SOUTHWARK, is the first of that Sort, of which there are now a great many, among the *Dissenters*. It was founded in the Year 1687, when we had the dismal Apprehensions of POPEY and SLAVERY as near approaching.

It is situate in one of the poorest Parts, about the City of LONDON, where there are great Numbers of Children of Watermen, and *poor People*, who are not able to bear the necessary Expences of keeping their Children at School.

The Children are taught to Read, and Write, and Cypher; and are instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion, from the *Assemblies Catechism*; and no *uncharitable* Distinction of Parties or Denominations are made in the Objects of this Charity.

There were but about *Forty* or *Fifty* Children taken in at *first*; but *now*, thro' the Benevolence of several well disposed Persons, the Number is increased to above *One Hundred*.


Not

POSTSCRIPT.

Not only, have several *Bibles*, *Testaments*, and *Catechisms* been given frequently to the poor Scholars, but some of them, particularly the last Year, have been cloathed and put out Apprentices.

The Charge hath been defrayed hitherto by some charitable *Subscriptions*, and an Annual *Collection* every *New-Years-Day*: And the Managers hope, that other Persons will still so far encourage this good Work, as to enable them, to make it yet more extensive and beneficial.





Newly printed for JOHN CLARK.

I. **A**N Exposition of the *Old and New Testament*: Wherein each Chapter is summ'd up in its Contents; the Sacred Text inserted at large, in distinct Paragraphs; each Paragraph reduced to its proper Heads; the Sense given, and largely illustrated; with practical Remarks and Observations: By the late Reverend Mr. *Matthew Henry*, in Six Volumes in *Folio*.

II. A complete Collection of the Sermons of the Reverend and Learned *JOHN OWEN*, D. D. formerly published; with an Addition of thirty more, never before printed: Also several valuable *Traits*, now first publish'd from *Manuscripts*; and some others, which were very scarce: To which are added his *Latin Orations* whilst *Vice-Chancellor of Oxford*, taken from his own Copies: And to the Whole are prefixed, *Memoirs of his Life*; some *Letters* written by Him upon special Occasions; and his *Funeral Sermon* preach'd by Mr. *David Clarkson*. In one Volume, *Folio*.

III. The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, Or Father, Son and Spirit, Three Persons and One God, asserted and proved; with their Divine Rights and Honours, vindicated by plain Evidence of Scripture, without the Aid or Incumbrance of Human Schemes. Written chiefly for the use of private Christians. By the Rev. Mr. *Isaac Watts*, 12mo. Price bound 1 s. 6 d.

IV. A Memorial of the Reformation, chiefly in *England*; and of *Britain's* Deliverances from Popery and Arbitrary Power, since that time, to the Year 1719. Containing the State of the Reformation under K. *Henry VIII.* K. *Edward VI.* and Q. *Elizabeth*; with the Principles and Endeavours of those who have from time to time stood for a farther Reformation, as a short History of Non-conformity: A particular Relation of all the Plots and Conspiracies of *Papists* and others against the Reformation, and Civil Liberties of the Land: Some short Memoirs of the Civil War in K. *Charles I.*s Time; and a distinct Answer to the Question, *Who cut off the King's Head?* By the Reverend Mr. *Bennet*. The Second Edition, with large Additions, 8vo.